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צָדָקָה in later Hebrew.—The word which has obtained currency among the Jews for “charity” or rather “alms,” is the Hebrew word **צָדָקָה**. Throughout the Old Testament this word signifies “justice” or “righteousness,” its Greek equivalent being *δικαιοσύνη*; but in several instances—eight in all—the version of the Septuagint has rendered the word by *ἐλεημοσύνη*, “mercy” or “benevolence,” thus showing that among the Hellenistic or Alexandrian Jews the popular acception of **צָדָקָה** had already gained ground. In Rabbinical writings the term **צָדָקָה** is only used in the signification of “benevolence” or “charitable gifts.” The transition from the meaning of righteousness to that of “benevolence,” and from the abstract noun to the concrete signification of “alms” is curious, and it deserves to be noted that our own word “alms” is a descendant of *ἐλεημοσύνη*, the first signification of which is the abstract idea of “pity” or “mercy.”—*Dr. Sigmond Louis, in Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Vol. VIII.*

Two Epigrams by Aben Ezra.—

I.

(The poet complains about the the unhappy course of his life.)

נָטוּ בְמַהֲלָכִי לְמוֹלַדְתִּי	גִּלְגַּל וּמוֹלֹת בְּמַעֲמָדִם
לֹא יֵאֱסֹף שִׁמְשׁ עָרֵי מוֹתִי	אִם יִהְיוּ נִרְוֹת סְחוּרֹתִי
כִּי עֹתוֹנִי כֹכְבִי שְׁמִי	אֵינֶנּוּ לְהַצְלִיחַ וְלֹא אוֹכֵל
לֹא יִגְעוֹן אִישִׁ כָּל יְמֵי	לֹא אֶהְיֶה סוֹתֵר בְּתַכְרִיכִן

II.

Whatever happens to man—be it joyful or sad—is of a fleeting character. ⁵Let us therefore keep the even tenor of our mind.)

כִּי יִלְדֵי יוֹם לֹא יִרְעוּ	מִלְדֵי יוֹם אֵל תִּבְהַל
גַּם אֵל תַּחַת אִם יִרְעוּ	אֵל תִּשְׁמַח בָּם אִם יִטִּיבוּ
כֹּאשֶׁר יִחַנוּ כֵּן יִסְעוּ	כִּי הַטּוֹבוֹת גַּם הָרָעוֹת

➤EDITORIAL: NOTES.◀

The Intermediate Syllable.—In reply to a question concerning the *Intermediate Syllable* referred to Dr. B. Felsenthal, and Mr. Benjamin Douglass, these gentlemen have kindly sent scholarly and valuable papers. There have been received also two other papers called forth by the article on this subject in the last issue. Because these papers are all quite long, and because so large a portion of the space of the preceding number was given to this topic, it has been deemed wise to delay somewhat the publication of additional matter in this line. It is believed that the subject is one of real importance, that to overlook or disregard it is to neglect a principle recognized by the Massoretic punctators in every verse, that the differences of opinion concerning it are due chiefly to the lack of clear and definite expression in its discussion. Now would it not be well for those engaged in teaching Hebrew to know the opinions and practice of each other in reference to this point? Will not professors and instructors kindly answer the following questions, and allow the publication of the same in the next HEBRAICA?

(1) Is the so-called *Intermediate* syllable to be recognized? If so, on what grounds?

(2) Is it worth while to attempt an explanation of its character and occurrence, to those who have been studying the language but for a short time? If so, in what manner?

(3) Of the names *intermediate*, *half-open*, *slight*, which is to be preferred? If none of these are acceptable, what may be suggested?

Let us have a *Symposium*, on the subject of the "Intermediate Syllable."

Hebrew Studies in Vanderbilt University.—From a statement prepared, at our request, by Prof. T. J. Dodd, we learn the following facts in reference to the study of Hebrew at Vanderbilt University.

(1) The course of study covers a period of three years, all of which time is occupied with the study of Hebrew, in the same sense in which these words would be used of the Greek or Latin. (2) Regarding the method which teaches inflections, meanings and written forms all at the same time, as contrary to nature, and as tending to confuse, Prof. Dodd teaches, largely by the *viva voce* process, the pronunciation, meanings and inflections of words of various parts of speech, and the leading peculiarities of syntax, *before any use is made of the printed text*. (3) When a large amount of this preparatory work has been performed, the alphabet, together with all the signs needed in pronunciation, is learned, and then a book containing lists of verbs and nouns is placed in the student's hand, from which he is drilled in the *written forms* of words whose pronunciation, meaning and inflection he has already learned. At the same time the more important sections of Green's grammar are marked out, to be learned by private study. (4) Students are encouraged to ask, and are themselves asked, all manner of questions, and in the elucidations of the text given day by day, the student is taken through quite a comprehensive course of Biblical Archæology and Hermeneutics, though no text-book is employed and no time is *nominally* devoted to these subjects. Believing this entire subject of Hermeneutics to be involved in a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew language, the professor teaches his students that the word of God in the language in which it is written is its own best interpreter, and that all formal principles of Hermeneutics, aside from the laws and usages of the Sacred Tongue are to be regarded with suspicion. (5) The students of Hebrew, with a few exceptions, take their meals at a common table, and so far as practicable put into use the Hebrew learned in the class-room. This the professor encourages them to do, believing, as he does, that notwithstanding the blunders made, there will be advance, and that the mere repetition of such words as they know, will contribute largely to a mastery of the language.

The work, as thus pursued, is said to arouse great interest. And while a large portion of the class-room work is thus given to exercises of a purely practical character, the study of the grammar of the language is kept up assiduously during the three years.

We invite the attention of students and instructors of Hebrew to these points, believing that by the study of each other's methods, we may be profited. Lack of space forbids a fuller statement. But sufficient has been mentioned to indicate the main characteristics of the work as carried on in this flourishing University of the South.

A Pastor's Testimony.—From a most devoted and hard working pastor in West Virginia come these words: "I have not abandoned the study of Hebrew, but for some time past I have been obliged to take it in homœopathic doses. Let me add my name to the list of those who advocate the introduction of Hebrew into the College curriculum. Nor would I have it optional with those who have the ministry in view. If our Theological Seminaries would make some knowledge of Hebrew a requirement for entrance to the best advantage, I believe they would do their students and the cause of the Gospel a favor."

The matter stands thus: If men are to be expected to continue the study of the Old Testament in the original, after entering upon the active work of the ministry, they must, beforehand, have received such a knowledge of the original as will enable them to do this with some ease. The time allotted to the study of Hebrew is not, in most cases, sufficient to accomplish this thing. Either the study should not be taken up, or, it must receive more time in the Seminary, or men must have some knowledge of Hebrew when they enter the Seminary. There is no option. One of these courses must be followed. While we believe thoroughly, that there are some men, called to preach the Gospel, whom God never intended should study Hebrew, and that for these men opportunity for the careful study of the Scriptures in English must be afforded, we would regret to see the course pursued by one our *Eastern* seminaries generally adopted. To place men who do not study Hebrew, on equal footing with men who do study it, to say virtually, it is a matter of small moment whether or not this language is studied, means a lowering of the standard of scholarship in any seminary in which such action is taken. There may, of course, be special reasons why this should be done, but unless they are made public, they cannot be considered. Such a step is a most serious blow to the interests of the highest and best Biblical study. Let men begin this study in College, and let them enter the Seminary with a knowledge of Hebrew, as well as with a knowledge of Greek. This is the opinion of thousands of clergymen who, to-day, realize, as those just entering the ministry do not realize, the value of such knowledge as an aid in the intelligent study of God's word.

The introduction of Hebrew into Colleges will come. It is only a question of time and work. Shall not those who favor such a step unite in an effort to bring it about?

Hebrew Study in the Junior Vacation.—"To begin a second year of the study of Hebrew with nothing lost of what was gained in the first; especially, to begin it with an enlarged vocabulary and greater facility in resolving grammatical forms, may make all the difference between success and failure in acquiring the language."

These are the introductory words of the preface to a volume containing the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel, together with a complete vocabulary of the book, prepared by Rev. A. S. Carrier, under the auspices of Dr. E. C. Bissell, of the Hartford Theological Seminary, and Professor C. R. Brown, of Newton Theological Institution. The volume is intended merely for private circulation. Is not the suggestion here made a most forcible one? Has it not been said, and with truth, that theological students know less *Hebrew* at the end of the Middle than at the end of the Junior year, and still less at the end of the Senior year? But how can this be explained? Because grammatical drill and the direct application of

grammatical principles stop short at the end of the junior year. But if a student who has just finished the work of the Junior year, during the interval between the first and second years of his seminary course, will set himself to read carefully and critically one of the Books of Samuel, or of Kings, and will in this study make out with exactness the place of each verbal form, at the same time making his own, so far as possible, the vocabulary of the book, in how much better condition he will be to do satisfactorily the higher and more important work of the Middle year. Is this not a thing to be done by every man who desires to make the most of himself in this department of study? Is it not a course to be urged by professors of Hebrew upon their students?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

1. At what (approximate) date did the use of *final* forms of letters, viz., Kāph, Mêm, Nûn, etc. begin to obtain with writers of Hebrew?

The final letters כ, ם, ן, ף, ץ seem to have been in use among the Jews ever since they changed their old original alphabet for כתב אשורי, "the Assyrian alphabet." The oldest Hebrew MSS. have these final letters; so have the oldest inscriptions upon gravestones,—and gravestones have been found in the Crimea whose inscriptions, if they are genuine, date back to the first Christian century. The Talmud also knows the peculiar final letters, and says that they were originated by the prophets. See Sabbath fol. 104a מנצפ"ך צפים אמרו.

2. When were the final letters first used to express numeral signs above four hundred?

As numeral signs the final letters appear mostly, if not exclusively, in the Masorah. I do not call to memory any instance from Talmudic, Midrashic, or late Rabbinic literature, in which the final letters are used to indicate numbers above four hundred. As an example of the Massoretic use of the final letters there may be cited the note at the end of Genesis, where it is stated that the book of Genesis contains 1534 verses, א"ך ל"ד סימן; as also the note at the end of Leviticus, where the number of verses is given as 849, נט"ף.

3. Would their numerical value be regarded as the same as that of the usual form in "Gematria," or the Rabbinical method of giving the "number" of a word?

In almost all statements, Massoretic statements excepted, the final letters have the same numerical values as the usual corresponding forms, e. g., in chronograms, on the title pages of Hebrew books, etc., in Gematriya'oth, and similar methods by which the "number" of a word is given. It is possible that a few exceptions from this rule may be found, but they will be few.

[For the answers to these questions we are indebted to Dr. B. Felsenthal, Chicago].